



# *the* Oak Hickory

Spring 2022

## LINN COUNTY CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT



[LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation](http://LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation)

319-892-6450

[conservation@linncountyiowa.gov](mailto:conservation@linncountyiowa.gov)

The Oak Hickory News is published three times each year by the Linn County Conservation Department.

## Cedar Valley Nature Trail Closes after Truck Strikes Bridge

A new bridge will be installed along the Cedar Valley Nature Trail after a garbage truck failed to clear the underpass near Lafayette in Linn County, about 7 miles southeast of Center Point. The low lying bridge, that crosses Fishel Road, was a former bridge created over 100 years ago along the WCF&N railroad line before conversion to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail in the 1980's. This incident on January 20 resulted in collapse and consequent bridge removal later that day. No injuries were reported.

Since that time, the Cedar Valley Nature Trail has been closed between Lafayette Road and East Otter Road. Investigation and options to move forward began immediately. The former bridge design, abutments, and current landscape along the trail has presented some unique challenges. However, the Conservation Board has been progressing as quickly as possible with design and engineering, and moving forward with the bid process for replacement. We appreciate the public's patience on this construction project to reconnect the trail.



## Iowa's Public Lands: Don't Take Them for Granted

— BY DENNIS GOEMAAT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR —

Do you value public lands and the opportunity to explore parks and other natural areas? For some reason, a group of legislators has determined that Iowa has enough public lands and introduced legislation intended to make it more difficult to provide new open space opportunities.

This effort started a few years ago. Iowans spoke loudly and clearly that they value public land and all of the benefits these remnants of Iowa's past landscape do for the state. Legislators met in a packed hearing room to discuss that bill. Speaker after speaker spoke against it. Only one lobbyist spoke in favor of the bill. It appeared that this effort had been put to rest.

I attended that hearing and was very impressed with the depth of the arguments against the legislation. Farmers expressed their affection for their land and how they hoped someday to pass it on for public use. Other landowners expressed similar sentiments for their remnants of native Iowa which they had had the privilege to enjoy during their lifetime with the intent of adding it to an adjacent natural area in the future. Business leaders spoke about the need for interesting places for people to enjoy to help them recruit and retain workers. Conservationists enumerated the benefits of public land. At the end of the hearing, the bill was shelved.

>> *Learn more on page 2*



# Iowa's Public Lands:

(continued from front page)



Shelved does not mean dead. This year, a group of legislators introduced a similar bill which would make it much harder to purchase land from willing sellers for conservation purposes. The argument has changed a bit, but the overall premise remains the same. Somehow, the paltry amount of conservation land in Iowa threatens livelihoods in Iowa.

I took a trip last weekend and travelled approximately two hundred miles in Iowa. I decided to do a windshield survey. As I drove along, I watched as far as I could see on either side of the road. I took notice of areas that looked intriguing as a place where I would want to spend more time. I made a special mental note of those areas that were public. In other words, if I had the time, I could have stopped and explored without asking anyone for permission.

In my completely unscientific windshield survey, I noted very limited places that intrigued me as a place I would like to visit and explore. I did drive past one public area. It was a park on the edge of a town. I should add that I did see a few signs indicating that there was a public area some distance

away, but I could not see them from the road.

I happen to know that the one public park I drove past is critically important to the nearby rural community. The lake in the park serves as the town's water supply. The natural area around the lake helps protect and buffer the water from contaminants. Trails allow the town's residents to walk or bike to the park. Once in the park, people enjoy picnicking, hiking, a playground, camping and many other outdoor recreation opportunities. Examples like this are common in Iowa. Local parks serving local residents and making the community a better place to live.

What I didn't see during my windshield survey is any indication that conservation areas were threatening livelihoods or the economic vitality of communities. In fact, many studies have documented the benefits of having nearby recreational lands and amenities. The 2020 Bureau of Economic Analysis report shows that outdoor recreation resulted in at least \$3.6 billion of economic activity in Iowa, supported approximately 42,800 jobs and \$1.7 billion in income as a

result. Plus, these areas help the environment by cleaning water and air while providing many other benefits for the community.

Covid-19 has significantly increased the use of parks, natural areas and trails. I am confident that the economic values of these areas have swelled as well. Public spaces shined and provided critical places for people to escape from the mental stress of the pandemic.

Every survey of Iowans I have seen shows amazing support for public lands and protecting our remaining natural heritage and places. And yet, Iowa remains near the bottom of the states in terms of land available for its citizens.

I have heard it said that most issues swing like a pendulum. Iowa's landscape is a great example. The pendulum has swung very far in the direction of modifying our natural landscape. There are indications from time to time that the pendulum may finally start to swing back toward moderation, but we are far from a point of equilibrium.

I grew up visiting public parks and recreating in these areas. To this day, I still use and value having access to these areas. I live in town with access to very little property of my own, so parks, trails natural areas and access to clean rivers and lakes is important to my quality of life. Public lands provide benefits to everyone regardless of social status or financial resources.

I fully understand that my lens may provide me a very different perspective than yours. I invite you to do your own windshield survey as you travel in Iowa. After some "survey time," I encourage you to reflect on what you observed. Does it appear to you that conservation is out of control and taking over Iowa's landscape? I know from my point of view, we are far from that point and much work remains to be done. I encourage you to let your legislators and elected officials know you value public lands.



## No Longer a Plain Ol' Campground

### Improvements taking place at Plains Campground at Pinicon Ridge Park

With usage continuing to grow at Linn County Conservation campgrounds, improvements and updates for the camping experience has been a Department priority, especially at Pinicon Ridge Park. The Plains Campground has been undergoing a transformation with the recent addition of a new showerhouse and storm shelter. Currently, this campground has 26 campsites, and a few more will be added with the available open space. A few campsites currently with no electricity will gain electric hookups. Other campsites have become troublesome during wet weather and are being reworked. Plans are also in place to install a small parking lot which will be near the current non-electric camping areas and next to what will be a new, small playground. This playground is expected to be installed later in the summer or early fall.

Pardon our construction in some areas of this campground as our work is dependent on ground conditions and the weather. Pinicon Ridge Park campsites are first-come, first-served. We invite you to visit the *Camping* page [LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation](http://LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation) for more information about all of our camping opportunities.



## National Register of Historic Places lists six Wickiup Hill sites

Thanks to the efforts of the Linn County Historic Preservation Commission and Tallgrass Archaeology, six prehistoric sites near the Wickiup Hill Learning Center were added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The area is part of a 751-acre site northwest of Cedar Rapids within the Cedar River Greenbelt. All of the sites at Wickiup tell a story that is unique to the people that lived here at some point and time. Past archeological studies here has resulted in evidence of the Middle Woodland Cultures (200 BC – AD 300), as well as more recent Native American cultures. The Oneota, Ioway, and Meskwaki people congregated in the area primarily during the winter months, due in part for the springs that continued to flow year round. These sites that are now recognized and protected on a federal level provide a physical link to the past and help build respect for the relationship between people and places today. The designation additionally brings more awareness of the site's value as an archaeological resource.

More than 95,000 properties across the country, including nearly 2,000 sites in Iowa are listed on the National Register. Authorized in 1966, the National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.



# Rent Linn County Conservation's Newest Facility

*New open-air shelter under construction at Morgan Creek Park.*



Morgan Creek Park Shelter – February Construction

## Take the Virtual Tour!



Find out more about the Morgan Creek Park Redevelopment at [LinnCountyIowa.gov/conservation](http://LinnCountyIowa.gov/conservation) or scan the QR code.

Despite the weather conditions, construction was able to continue over the winter at the Morgan Creek Park redevelopment site, located to the south of the existing park and north of E Ave. near Cedar Rapids.

A new, open-aired shelter is being created to complement the new park area, adjacent to a new state-of-the-art playground expected to open in coming months.

The new shelter will be able to accommodate a larger number of guests for family events, group outings, corporate social gatherings, or whatever the occasion. The facility encompasses 2,520 square feet, large enough to seat 125-140 people, depending on how much space you want to utilize. The shelter additionally features two large serving counters with electrical outlets, three nearby charcoal grills, a rock pad with electricity





Five new picnic shelters are being created at Morgan Creek Park, made from salvaged lumber from the 2020 derecho: hickory, red oak, white oak, cherry, and walnut.

that allows for a larger mobile cooker, and a recreational fire pit (firewood available for a fee). Along with the playground, flushable restrooms and access to the trail are nearby.

The new Morgan Creek Shelter is currently available for reservations for days after June 15, then closes for the season October 15 (reopening for use the following spring starting April 15). The older, smaller shelter currently located on the north side, will be closed for public use after June 15, except for those who have reserved the group camping area.



To reserve and rent this new venue, visit [LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation](https://linncountyiowa.gov/Conservation) and visit Facility Rentals. Click the Morgan Creek Shelter link and begin your reservation!



The Linn County Conservation Board dedicated the former school as a museum in 1964.

## Visit Iowa's Oldest One Room Brick Schoolhouse

Did you know Abbe Creek School Museum is believed to be the oldest standing one room brick school house in Iowa? This summer you can walk into the past and visit the school, known back in the day as "Sumner" and "Kepler" School.

The doors of the school closed in 1936 after serving the community 92 years. The building was later converted into a private home. The school and yard were purchased by the Linn County Conservation Board, where it was restored and dedicated as a museum in 1964. Along with renovations throughout the years, a new parking lot and accessible restrooms were recently added.

Abbe Creek School Museum located at 877 W. Mount Vernon Road, rural Mount Vernon, is open Sunday afternoons 1-5 p.m. in June, July and August (Memorial Day - Labor Day). School groups, youth groups and others interested in using this historic facility are encouraged to call 319-892-6485.





# Feed Iowa FIRST

## Feed Iowa First Enters into Lease Agreement

Linn County Conservation is partnering with Feed Iowa First to support a project focused on increasing land access, improving food access, education, and regenerative farming practices through local vegetable production. A creative 20 year farm lease has been signed for 17 acres on the southern portion of the 1,114 acre Wanatee Park, just south of Lakeside Road, Marion. This unique agreement allows Feed Iowa First to justify the cost of water infrastructure and equipment that are critical for vegetable production. The Dows-Maniti Trail, currently under design with Linn County Conservation, would extend near the site.

The land here had previously been in corn and soybean rotation for many years and will continue to be used for agricultural production with an emphasis on regenerative farming practices such as cover crops, no-till areas, and rotations. The project will focus on increasing land access for marginalized individuals in the community to grow culturally relevant crops, while stimulating a market for locally grown food. The land lease between Linn County Conservation and Feed Iowa First is a large step towards supporting a local food system in Linn County and the City of Cedar Rapids.



## Is the Wapsi calling *you?*

The Watercraft Concession, a popular feature at Pinicon Ridge Park for over 40 years, provides in-park rentals for use along the backwater channels of the Wapsipinicon River within the park. Staffed from May to August, you can spend a couple of hours in a canoe, kayak, or on a paddleboat: \$10/hour or \$25/day (\$35 overnight rental for registered campers).

You also can reserve a leisurely experience down the scenic Wapsi for a 2, 4, or 6 hour canoe trip. Linn County Conservation provides the canoes and life jackets — you supply refreshments and any other small gear you would like to bring. Pinicon Ridge Park staff will shuttle you up river to one of the three drop off points, depending on the trip you'd like to take.

**9 a.m. (6 hour trip) \$25 | 11 a.m. (4 hour trip) \$30  
1 p.m. (2 hour trip) \$35 RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**

Visit [LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation](http://LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation) to learn more about the Watercraft Concession at Pinicon Ridge Park. For canoe trip reservations, call the Pinicon Ridge Park office at 319-438-6616.





## FROM LINN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

If you are a private well owner and have not had your well water tested yet this calendar year, you may be eligible for free water testing, which includes sample collection by a certified sampler through the Grants to Counties well program. The program will pay for the collection and testing costs for two different tests, coliform bacteria and nitrates. If your well has never been tested for arsenic, it may also qualify for an arsenic test at no charge.

Linn County Public Health (LCPH) recommends that all owners test their private wells for both coliform bacteria and nitrates at least once a year, even if the well has had a prior history of satisfactory water sampling.

In many cases, well water issues may be treated at low cost, but the first step is to have the water tested. If you would like to take advantage of this free water testing, you may sign up by contacting LCPH at 319-892-6000.



# Free Well Testing for Those That Qualify

## Septic Funding Available from the Iowa Finance Authority



The Iowa Finance Authority has announced funds available through the Water Infrastructure Grant, made available through the American Rescue Plan Act. These funds target unsewered communities addressing repair or replacement of private sewage disposal systems. Failing sewage disposal systems or systems in disrepair pose environmental and public health risks.

Eligibility requirements for this grant include:

- › Property must be located in an unsewered community.
- › Maximum of one grant award per person and per property.
- › Properties must be constructed prior to July 1, 1983.
- › Properties that have transferred ownership since July 1, 2009 are not eligible unless the transfer was exempt from time of transfer requirements.

For further information and to obtain an application, visit Wastewater Infrastructure for Unsewered Communities at [lowafinance.com/waterinfrastructure](https://lowafinance.com/waterinfrastructure).

Linn County Public Health will review, sign and send the application to the State, once the application is completed. After State approval, LCPH staff will continue working with approved applicants in Linn and Jones Counties through the permit and final completion process. The Iowa Finance Authority will reimburse the property owner the documented eligible costs not exceeding the grant amount.



# SPRING & SUMMER PROGRAMS & CAMPS

Programs and events are held at the Wickiup Hill Learning Center unless stated otherwise



**REGISTRATION REQUIRED.** Events/class sizes are limited.

Visit [LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation](http://LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation) and click EVENTS to learn more and register.

10260 Morris Hills Road

Toddville, IA

(319) 892-6485

[conservation@linncountyiowa.gov](mailto:conservation@linncountyiowa.gov)

## APRIL

### 10th Annual Nature Egg Hunt

**Saturday, April 16, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Get ready for our annual outdoor egg hunt adventure! Challenge your youngsters to find 10 different colored eggs and turn them in for prizes. Be ready to look high and low for eggs hidden in the tallgrass prairie, playscape, woodland, and along the savanna hiking trail. You can start this easygoing egg hunt as soon as you arrive. Aimed for ages 3 and up. Cost \$3.



## MAY

### Just a Walk in the Park Series – Mushroom Ramble

**Saturday, May 7, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Marty Augustine of the Prairie State Mushroom Club will lead participants on a search for fungus. Get ready to head into the woods along the Cedar River. Bring a container to collect mushrooms and dress for conditions that may



include hilly forested terrain, ticks, mosquitoes or poison ivy. This event is free, but registration is required.

### Walk on the Wild Side Series – Wild-flower Hike at Hitaga Sand Ridge Prairie Preserve, 2727 Wapsi Ridge Dr., Walker **Wednesday, May 25, 6 – 7:30 p.m.**

This 156-acre prairie preserve is home to threatened wildlife and plant species such as the ornate box turtle and prickly pear cactus. Joining us is local botanist and butterfly expert Frank Olson to tell us about other uncommon species. Not particularly kid-friendly due to obstacles. This event is free, but registration is required.



## JUNE



### Youth Fishing Clinic Saturday, June 4, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Pinicon Ridge Park

The North Linn Fish and Game Club and Linn County Conservation cosponsors a youth fishing clinic near the Watercraft Concession area in Pinicon Ridge Park. All youth participants will receive prizes for participating. This event will be held during the state's Free Fishing Weekend so no fishing licenses are needed. Cost is free. No registration is required.

### Critter Catch

**Saturday, June 4, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

We celebrate the vital importance of wetlands to our ecological, economic, and social health. Families are invited for a hands-on wetland exploration to discover what critters are living in or around the water. Use nets to catch frogs, crawdads, snails, and insects hatching throughout the wetlands as part of a water quality assessment. Naturalists will help you identify critters and will have microscopes on hand for viewing and identifying samples as well. Check out the on-site exhibits, displays, and activities provided by Iowa State University and other partnering organizations. Come and go during this time. Cost is free. No registration is required.



### Introduction to Nature Journaling

**Sunday-Wednesday, June 5-8,  
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

Using the trails and surrounding natural areas, Wickiup Hill will inspire you to create a journal that enriches your life through the observation of nature and the wonder in your own mind. Learn more on page 12. Online registration deadline is May 5. Payment due at Wickiup Hill Learning Center by May 12.



### Science for Squirts: Bugs and Butterflies Wednesday, June 8, 10 a.m.

Children enjoy a story and activities based on this monthly theme. Ages 3-6, but younger and older siblings are welcome. Cost: \$3/child.

### Creek Study & You

**Thursday, June 9, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Bever  
Park Duck Pond Pavilion, Cedar Rapids**

Get your hands in the water and dip into our creek study. Explore what's in the mud, learn about plant and critter life, and practice fishing techniques. Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation, Iowa DNR and Linn County Conservation will cosponsor this youth stream study. Bring a sack lunch not needing refrigeration and a bottle of water. Dress to wade in the stream. Cost is \$12/per 8-11 year old student. Registration: CRREC.org



### Tie-Dye-Friday!

**Friday, June 10, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**



Summer is the perfect time for tie-dyeing. Investigate the use of plants to create dyes from nature's rainbow and experiment with different dyeing methods. Other dye material will be used during the class. Bring a white cotton t-shirt and we will provide other materials to customize. Ages: 10+. Cost: \$12/child.

### Mindful Rock Painting

**Wednesday, June 15, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

Tap into your creative side and be in nature while mindfully painting rocks! Come enjoy this rocking painting event with Jodi from Big Heart Meditation and Mindfulness. You will leave with a beautiful creation and feel better doing so! This is a family event. We provide all the materials. No painting experience necessary. Cost: \$5/person.





## **Fuzzy, Furry, Slimy, Scaly**

**Thursday, June 16, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Bever Park Duck Pond Pavilion, Cedar Rapids**



We will explore the group of animals called vertebrates, comparing the birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fishes. Participants will learn about the categories of creatures using live animals and many hands-on exam-

ples. We will learn about what makes the groups the same and what makes them different. Join the fun in the pavilion near the duck pen. Cedar Rapids Park and Recreation, Iowa DNR and Linn County Conservation cosponsors this annual educational program. Bring a sack lunch not needing refrigeration and a bottle of water. Dress to wade in the stream. Cost: \$12/per 8-11 year old. Registration: CRREC.org.

## **Dutch Oven Cooking**

**Thursday, June 16, 5:30 - 8 p.m.**

Kick off the summer by learning traditional Dutch oven cooking. Cooking done in cast iron pots over coals is great for campers, tailgaters and outdoor cooks. Help prepare meals that will have everyone wanting seconds! Learn the history, and how to clean and store your Dutch oven. And of course, you will get to taste a variety of dishes for breakfast, supper and a yummy dessert. Some food prep is done indoors. Cost: \$7/adult, \$3/child 16 and under.

## **Eco Explorers: Preschool Camp**

**Tuesday-Thursday, June 21, 22, 23, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

Eco Explorers build confidence and connection to the outdoors. Kids explore in a group, creating new friendships. They practice outdoor skills through hands-on activities, using all five senses to engage their natural curiosity. Together we learn through story, make friends, and learn to safely explore nature. This is a drop-off program that encourages independence from the caregiver. We will meet out front by the kiosk near the parking lot at 9:30 a.m. for easy drop-off. Ages 3-6. Cost \$10/day. Sign up for all three days or whatever fits your schedule.



## **Youth Exploration in Nature Journaling**

**Wednesday, June 22, 6-8 p.m.**

Children will be encouraged to explore the world of Wickiup with some ways to boost their creativity with writing and sketching. Learn more on page 12. Online registration deadline is May 5. Payment due at Wickiup Hill Learning Center by May 12.

## **Jr. Eco-Engineers Camp**

**Friday, June 24, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

If you love to create, then this camp is for you! Explore the fascinating structures of the animal world. Build a life-size bird's nest. Head down to the river for water play and model beaver dam construction. Investigate the structure of bee-hives and create cool honeycomb crafts. Imagine you are a giant spider and build a web with your team. See how many things you can catch in the web! Ages: 10+. Cost: \$15/child.

## **Picnic in the Park at Wickiup Hill**

**Tuesday, June 28, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

Join a naturalist for story time, some fun activities, and meet a critter. Bring your lunch and a blanket and stay for a picnic in the park! Meet out front by the kiosk near the parking lot. Cost: Free, but don't forget to register.

## **Family Pond Study**

**Tuesday, June 28, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.**



There is so much life in a pond. Dip into the wetland with a net, and see what lies below the surface. We'll examine the smallest daphnia to the largest bullfrog. Your family will be amazed how each tiny creature plays a very big role in this important

ecosystem. Meet out front by the kiosk near the parking lot. Cost: \$5/family, \$2.50/adult, \$1/child.

## **JULY**

### **Kids Fishing Derby**

**Monday, July 4, Following the Parade until 1:30 p.m. at City Park, Central City**

In partnership with the Central City Sons of Am. Vets Post 37, participants will be fishing along the Wapsipinicon River. Fishing poles provided if needed. Cost: Free. Registration not required.

### **Mother Nature's Fireworks**

**Wednesday, July 6, 8-9 p.m.**

This family friendly firefly catch, release and observation program teaches about this mysterious insect with views up close on our trails near the Wickiup Hill Learning Center. Meet out front by the kiosk near the parking lot. Cost: \$1/child 16 and under or \$2.50/adult.





## Ranger Camp

**Thursday-Friday, July 7 and 8, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Rangers develop independence and self-reliance in the outdoors. Guided by our naturalists, they journey through action-packed adventures, building confidence while connecting with friends. They practice outdoor skills and nature awareness through hands-on activities. Ages 7-10. Cost: \$25/person

## Camp Talon

**Thursday, July 14, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.**



The ability to see a live falcon or owl up close is not soon forgotten. RARE (Raptor Advocacy Rehabilitation and Education) Group will introduce you to their Educational Ambassador Raptors. Learn about the impact humans can have on wildlife as well as the role wild-life and humans play together. Once you have an opportunity to meet the Ambassadors, enjoy a hike and explore Wickiup's trails to learn about other local birds. Ages 9-12. Cost: \$15/person

## Hunter Education Class Series

**Monday-Wednesday, July 25-27,  
6:30 – 10 p.m.**

This hunter education program introduces students to several life-long skills important for many different types of outdoor recreational opportunities. If you want to obtain an Iowa hunting license and you were born after January 1, 1972, it is mandatory that you complete hunter education training once you reach the age of 16. Attendance at each class is necessary to receive certification. Participants must be 12 years old to use their certificates. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources provides all course materials. To register, go to the Hunter Education section at [IowaDNR.gov](http://IowaDNR.gov).

## AUGUST



### Science for Squirts: Rainbow Hunt

**Friday, August 5, 10 a.m.**

Ages 3-6, but younger and older siblings are welcome. Cost: \$3/child.

### Picnic in the Park: Wanatee Park

**Wednesday, August 10,  
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

Join a naturalist for story time, some fun activities, and meet a critter. Bring your lunch and a blanket and stay for a picnic in the park! Look for the big yellow sign near the playground (2100 Big Bluestem Circle, Marion) at the top of the picnic hill. Cost: Free, but don't forget to register.

## FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

@LinnCoConserv 

Linn County Conservation



## SUBSCRIBE TO OUR ENEWS

Send us your email at  
[conservation@linncountyiowa.gov](mailto:conservation@linncountyiowa.gov)  
Just type ENEWS in subject line.

Our Linn County Conservation eNews blasts occur throughout the month, keeping you up to date on all the happenings in our parks, trails, natural areas, and for upcoming events.





# Nature Journaling



//////////  
Nature lovers, artists, scientists, poets and incessantly curious folks will immerse themselves into various facets of nature journaling. We are holding several unique opportunities to experience nature in a new way. Our courses will be separate for adults and youth, but will cover some techniques and approaches to journaling in the great outdoors. A very skilled set of instructors will lead these courses and help to start you down a path towards documenting your moments outdoors through sketching, writing and landscapes.  
//////////

## Introduction to Nature Journaling

**Sunday - Wednesday, June 5 - 8, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.**

*Online registration deadline is May 5. Payment due at Wickiup Hill Learning Center by May 12.* We hope to inspire you to create a journal that enriches your life through the observation and wonder of nature. During the span of these four evenings, we will make our own charcoal for sketching – we will have one evening each focused upon drawing, writing, and sketching landscapes. Each evening will be at Wickiup Hill Learning Center and we will use the trails and surrounding natural areas. Participants will receive quality colored pencils, drawing pencils, a watercolor kit, a journaling notebook and more to enable your journaling future. Instruction for the drawing/sketching portion will be guided by Lynne Majetic – B.A. in Biological Illustration; the writing, numbers, and nature portion will be covered by Conservation Naturalist Chuck Unga; and sketching landscapes will be covered by Conservation Project Planner Ted Doscher – PLA, CPSI. Ages 16+. Cost \$120/person.

## Youth Exploration in Nature Journaling

**Wednesday, June 22, 6-8 p.m**

*Online registration deadline is May 5, payment due at Wickiup Hill Learning Center by May 12.* This session is designed to boost your youth's interest in writing and sketching, further encouraging the exploration of the world of Wickiup with some ways to boost their creativity. Using the awesome materials supplied, each student will be able to begin the journals here, and then will take them home to continue on their own unique journaling journey. Lynne Majetic, Chuck Unga, and Ted Doscher will again lead the class. Ages 6 to 15. Cost: \$50/person.



# Forest Bathing Series

## Wellness and Immune Support with Nature

We discover the practice of Forest Bathing, guided by Emelia Sautter, Certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide with Good Medicine. You will be guided through clearly defined sequences to allow your senses to open, and experience the environment to deepen the relationship with self and nature. You also spend time in silence, listening and feeling with a quiet and accepting presence. This series will connect you with four of our beautiful Linn County Conservation areas as well as leave you with enough experience to practice nature immersion on your own. Please dress for being outdoors and weather conditions for that day. Water bottles, bug spray, walking sticks and something to sit on are encouraged. These slow walks with the land are typically 1.5 miles or less and fit for all physical conditions. Ages 15+. Cost: \$20/person.

April 15, 6 – 8 p.m. at Wickiup Hill Learning Center

May 13, 6 – 8 p.m. at Rock Island Preserve

June 10, 6 – 8 p.m. at Ennis Preserve

July 15, 6 – 8 p.m. at Morgan Creek  
(meet at Arboretum parking lot)



# Face Trees

## Photography Exhibit Opens at Wickiup Learning Center April 30

As an artist and one who is inspired by fresh air and a walk in the woods, Mari Phelan feels there is a physical, emotional and spiritual connection to the work around her. She says “we have a connection with what we see, but we don’t always see what is there.” Mari has learned that there is much more to see if we just take a moment to look...and that’s what this exhibit is all about.

Mari Phelan lives in Cedar Rapids, with a background in Technical Illustration, Commercial Design and Photography with experience in graphics, art, sales, design work and health and wellness.

Life has its ups and downs. Sometimes we are way too busy, our lives get complicated and we have to go in so many different directions, experiencing all kinds of emotions. But the research is clear, exposure to the natural world has robust effects on people’s health, happiness and healing. There is a human need for nature and Mari is hoping this exhibit will simply show us all another way to look at trees. Maybe you can even emotionally relate to one of their expressions. Just take a moment to look around. Face Trees are out there. You just have to look. The exhibit will be available throughout the summer.

## Camping with Iowa State Extension

Linn County Conservation and Iowa State Extension and Outreach Linn County 4-H are providing camps this summer. These day-long camps at Wickiup Hill Learning Center are educational, interactive, and sure to keep your child’s attention.

**Kitchen Concoctions**, June 14, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Mystery Solved**, June 30, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Taste of Iowa**, July 6, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Mindfulness Thrive**, July 28, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Science of Flight**, August 1, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

To see a complete description of each camp and to register, please visit: [www.extension.iastate.edu/linn/summer-programs](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/linn/summer-programs)



# Paddle Away!

Linn County Conservation offering educational opportunities for the new or experienced kayaker through partnerships and various programs.



## Paddles in the Pool – Intro to Kayaking

Have you always wanted to learn to kayak, but don't know where to start? Or maybe you just want to brush up on your skills. This one-day class led by American Canoe Association (ACA) certified instructors will cover appropriate gear, safety basics, kayak strokes, and more. You bring swimwear and wear it in the pool. We have two sessions available at two different locations. Sign up for whichever one is convenient for you!

### **Saturday, June 11, 9-11 a.m., Cherry Hill Aquatic Center, Cedar Rapids**

To register, visit the Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation website at [CRREC.org](http://CRREC.org) (the event is listed as Intro to Kayaking and number 104223-02). Ages 15+. Youth must be supervised. Cost: \$15/person.

### **Sunday June 12, 9-11 a.m., Willowood Park Swimming Pool, Marion**

To register, visit the Marion Parks and Recreation website at [marion.recdesk.com](http://marion.recdesk.com), and reference Intro to Kayak. Ages 12+. Youth must be supervised. Indicate height and weight for us to provide the proper size kayaks. Cost: \$10/person.

## Kayaking Safety Basics

If you're new to kayaking, the backwaters at Pinicon Ridge Park are a great place to practice and learn about open water kayaking, but in a more controlled backwater setting. Join American Canoe Association certified kayak instructors as we cover Personal Flotation Devices (PFD), equipment, river etiquette, where to paddle and safety. We will practice basic strokes, graceful entry and exit of a kayak and more. This session should be helpful to even experienced paddlers but is ideal for those just "getting their feet wet".

### **Tuesday, June 14, 6-8 p.m. or Tuesday, June 21, 6-8 p.m. at Pinicon Ridge Park, Watercraft Concession**

For this class, you should provide your own gear, boats, paddles, etc. Limited additional gear may be provided. Please call 319-892-6485 to arrange for that option. Online registration required at [LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation](http://LinnCountyIowa.gov/Conservation). Cost: \$20/session



## Introduction to White Water Kayaking



Through a cooperative agreement between Linn County Conservation, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation, and Manchester Parks and Recreation, we are pleased to offer you a Continuing Education Course designed to help you get your feet wet in the sport through a series of experiences. We will anticipate the thrill of the adventure and we wish to see you grow in the sport!

The classes are held:

**July 10, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Bender Pool, Cedar Rapids**

**July 11 and 13, 6-8 p.m., Eagle View Shelter at Pinicon Ridge Park**

**July 16, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Manchester White Water Park**

Classes will include an introduction to rolling, basic strokes, safety considerations, several river experiences to start skills work, and then a visit to Manchester White Water Park to give paddling white water a try. This should provide you a nice base to build upon for your journey into white water kayaking. Participants will learn various ways to connect with the white water community. Course taught by American Canoe Association certified White Water Kayak instructors. Find the course in the Kirkwood Summer Continuing Education Guide by registering at [www.kirkwood.edu/ce](http://www.kirkwood.edu/ce), or call 319-398-1022. Cost \$95/person.





# Freedom Bike Ride

From training wheels to triathlon competitors, all are welcome at the 6th annual Freedom Bike Ride! This new and improved ride will include two different loop routes, 28 miles and 45 miles passing through Marion, Cedar Rapids, Center Point, and Hiawatha. Come join us and enjoy the ride and pit stops along the way!

## Registration Information:

Pre-registration fee is \$40 and includes a boxed meal after the ride and \$10 in Bike Bucks that is good at all Pit Stops along the ride. Same day registration is \$45 and will begin at 9 a.m.

## Route Information:

The ride will once again begin and end at Lowe Park in Marion. The 45 mile ride will begin at 9:30 a.m. and 28 mile ride at 10 a.m. Rest stops with restrooms and snacks will be available along the route. Designated stops will be announced soon at FreedomFestival.com

## Board & Staff

### Linn County Board of Supervisors

Stacey Walker District 1  
Ben Rogers, District 2  
Louis Zumbach, District 3

### Conservation Board

Hillary Hughes, President  
Steve Emerson, Vice-President  
Cindy Burke, Secretary  
Brent Oleson, Member  
George Kanz, Member

### Administration

Dennis Goemaat, Executive Director  
Daniel Gibbins, Deputy Director  
Randy Burke, Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Ted Doscher, Project Planner  
Ryan Schlader, Community Outreach Specialist  
John Layton, Senior Account Clerk  
Meredith Glynn, Office Coordinator  
Deanna Donovan, Senior Clerk Typist (part-time)

### Conservation Education (Naturalists) at Wickiup Hill Learning Center

Kent Rector, Nature Center Manager  
Jenny Corbett, Lead Conservation Education Specialist  
Chuck Unga, Conservation Education Specialist  
Sarah Wendt, Conservation Education Specialist

### Natural Resources Unit

Dana Kellogg, Natural Resources Manager  
Andrew Huck, Conservation Ecologist  
and Land Protection Specialist  
Tony Nemmers, Natural Resources Specialist  
Josh Volz, Resource Technician  
Landon Barnes, Resource Technician\*

### Services Unit

Chuck Bogard, Operations Manager  
Tom Oberbreckling, Construction Coordinator  
Dave Kephart, Carpenter  
Tony Aarhus, Heavy Equipment Operator  
Thomas Eiben, Heavy Equipment Operator  
Bill Perrin, Operations Technician  
Tom Blythe, Mechanic

### North Cedar District

Shaun Reilly, Resource Manager  
(Park Ranger, Morgan Creek Park)  
Josh Fossum, Assistant Resource Manager  
Jared VanHamme, Resource Technician  
Shawn McDonald, Resource Technician  
Ella Huff, Resource Technician

### South Cedar District

Jason Baumann, Resource Manager  
(Park Ranger, Wanatee Park)  
Joe Reu, Assistant Resource Manager  
Chris Burian, Resource Technician

### Wapsipinicon District

Aaron Batchelder, Resource Manager  
(Park Ranger, Pinicon Ridge Park)  
Steve Deaver, Assistant Resource Manager  
Nathan Allen, Resource Technician  
Noah Krob, Resource Technician  
Nick Haight, Resource Technician

*In addition, Linn County Conservation hires seasonal employees, primarily during the warm recreation season.*

*\*position shared with South Cedar District*



Linn County Conservation  
Department  
10260 Morris Hills Rd  
Toddville, Iowa 52341  
Phone (319) 892-6450



Nonprofit Organization  
U.S.POSTAGE  
PAID  
Center Point, Iowa  
Permit No. 4

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## WICKIUP HILL LEARNING CENTER HOURS

*Open on Sundays – April through October.*

### **BUILDING HOURS**

Monday – Friday	8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Saturday	10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Sunday	1 – 4 p.m.

**OUTDOOR AREAS OPEN  
SUNRISE TO SUNSET**

